

My Week

by R. J. Deachman

The other day I wanted to get a cork for a bottle. I asked my druggist if he could give me one. "A cork", he said, "I don't use them, I haven't bought a cork for five years. Every thing now has screw tops."

Then I thought I would see what had happened to corks and found that they were still coming into the country—more now than ever. The cork had disappeared from the drug store, where is it?

I was still on the look out. I peeked into our own kitchen—not a cork in sight. There was a vast assortment of bottles of different kinds, though none of them of the dangerous kind, there wasn't a cork to be seen. Then a man who ought to know gave me a glimpse of light. "What about booze", he said, "it

comes into this country in bulk and is bottled". Is that where the corks are going? I wouldn't know.

People are wondering why hospital bills are so high. Dr. Blair, M.P. for Lanark in a recent speech in the House of Commons gave one reason, the cost of constructing a fifty-room hospital is approximately \$9,000 per room. The cost of even a modern home is supposed to run anywhere over \$2,000 per room. Then according to the Vancouver News-Herald 27% of all hospital bills are uncollectable. There are always ways of explaining why things cost so much.

Starting with these two initial disadvantages it would take more than genius to run a hospital successfully. It is not the high cost of living alone which affects the average man but it is the high cost of the numerous things which are not normally included in the cost of living. The only solution of this problem



SHADOWS OF A CRISIS

Judging from the suggestions made in the House of Commons by various members about the need for a full discussion of foreign affairs particularly on the part being played by Canada with respect to current events in Europe, there is no doubt that the shadows of some sort of crisis are deepening in world affairs, with the spread of communistic influence and the determined drive of opponents arousing untold interest along Parliament Hill. Indeed, veteran observers here believe that it is one of the most important questions on Parliament Hill at the moment, though the man in the street across Canada may not realize that foreign affairs have reached such a point especially in view of the numerous domestic issues which are making the headlines daily.

Nevertheless, hints can be heard on Parliament Hill indicating that the world in this postwar period is far from passing through a calm, settled period and grave concern is evident as shadows of a crisis appear to be deepening rather than disappearing.

NO CHANGE

"There is no change in our dollar situation which made the change ne-

which has been put forward so far is to make health a provincial or national affair. People get sick, we try to cure them and put the bill up to the provinces. Unfortunately that offers no remedy. The costs of government have gone up enormously.

The sales tax originated in 1920. It was then 1% now it is 8% and it became eight before the recent war and hasn't changed since. Most of us can remember when the income tax was unheard of, now it sits on our back as a sort of nightmare all the year round. Ordinary expenditures of the Dominion Government have gone up from \$413 million in 1939 to \$1,234 million in 1947.

All this has nothing to do with war and demobilization. It rests mainly in a steady increase of social services which some people want and get and to a feeling which exists in the country that when the government pays they get something for nothing. The main problem however and the inescapable one is the cost of war. If we can learn to live with Stalin without starting a war all may be well but what does Stalin think of that?

We do however claim this—production has increased enormously. If we can keep it up all will be well but if depression comes, and it may then we shall find ourselves like a business with too much overhead for volume of sales—that will be the beginning of real trouble. Meanwhile a new wheat deal is in view—it gives the idea that prices are likely to be lower in the next few years. International wheat deals have been difficult to complete in the past. Will they be easier in the future?

cessary," Finance Minister Abbott told the House of Commons when asked about a report that Canada has already drawn \$50,000,000 against the \$300,000,000 loan negotiated by Canada with the Reconstruction Finance Corp. in the United States. This advance is one of a series which I anticipate will be taken over the next few months.

It is clear that rumors or stories circulating that the import bans will be lifted quickly or shortly are completely unfounded and Canada's reserves at about \$500,000,000 are very much less than they should be—or lower than the Government would like to see them, eliminating possibilities of early removal of import bans.

CUTTING PRICES

The report that Canadian leather may move down in price and this would bring lower footwear prices in the coming months has caused widespread interest in this capital, because this is being interpreted in unofficial circles as indicating a possibility that the soaring cost of living may have reached its peak or near it. At least, it is held that this Canadian industry, by its voluntary price action, is starting something which may lead eventually to other price reductions and it is said that it would not be surprising if a wave of price cuts or minor adjustments follow across Canada. It is no secret here that consumer resistance to high prices in some lines is stronger than it has been publicized so that corrective price drops may be in the making.

EXPORT OF URANIUM

"The security regulations of the Atomic Energy Board make it not in the public interest to answer this question," said Trade and Commerce Minister Howe, when asked by an MP in the House of Commons "what was the total amount of Uranium exported by Canada to the United States during the last three years of record and the value of same."

PRACTICALLY NOTHING

With the anticipated arrival of warmer weather before long and more traveling, countless Canadians

are just beginning to realize the effects of the austerity program of the Canadian Government in regard to travel restrictions this year so that enquires are multiplying rapidly now. When a spokesman for the government was asked what Canadians can bring back from the U.S. now, his answer left no doubt about the rigorous application of the regulations. "There is practically nothing that a tourist can purchase down there and bring back which is not either on the prohibited list or the quota list which means there is very little that he can bring back," he said.

VETERAN AFFAIRS

"At the end of this war the people as a whole throughout Canada were

determined that this time nothing should be left undone to make rehabilitation and re-establishment work." Veterans Minister Gregg, VC, told the House of Commons. A good many old veterans of the first world war looked with a good deal of concern on their past experience and wondered whether the fervour at the end of this war would have as short a life and become swallowed up in materialism as it was in the early twenties." The minister emphasized the Government's intentions to do everything possible for the Veterans in dealing with pensions, treatment, and re-establishment welcoming any well conceived and constructive suggestion. (continued on page 5)

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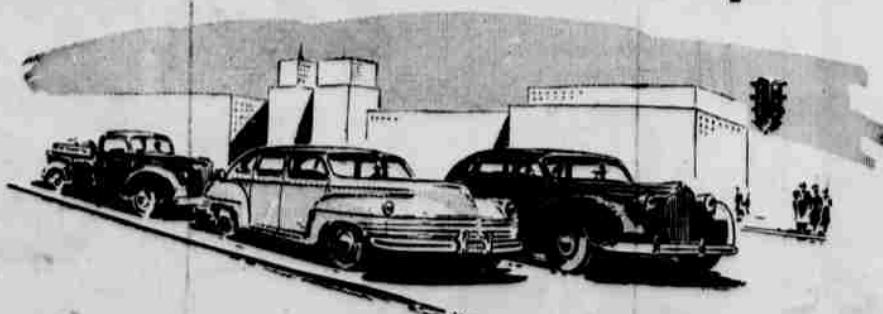
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